



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
**Department of Health Services**



**SANDRA SHEWRY**

Director

January 11, 2005

**ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER**

Governor

TO: Health Care Providers

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA HAS LIFTED INACTIVATED INFLUENZA VACCINE  
RESTRICTIONS

All Californians are now eligible to receive inactivated influenza vaccine (flu shot). State Public Health Officer Dr. Richard Joseph Jackson has rescinded the Public Health Order that previously restricted use of vaccine. The enclosed press release issued on Friday, January 7, 2005, provides further details. The restriction was lifted to ensure that all remaining flu vaccine in physician offices is used and to encourage providers to order vaccine to vaccinate individuals who have not been able to receive vaccine thus far. We urge you to continue vaccinating your high-risk patients, but you may now offer vaccine to any patient who wants protection from the flu.

Both adult and pediatric inactivated influenza vaccine is available for health care providers to order through their local health department now. Local Health Department contact information can be found at <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/izgroup/lhdlist.htm>. The California Department of Health Services' Immunization Branch will work to facilitate timely delivery of orders from distributors. FluMist (nasal spray) vaccine remains available now in many pharmacies or can be ordered through the manufacturer.

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It is not too late to vaccinate your patients. □ Influenza activity remains low, but it is increasing. The peak in activity is not expected until at least late January or February, so there is still time to order vaccine and protect patients from the serious complications of influenza. As of January 1, 2005, Medicare reimbursement rates have doubled so that providers are better able to cover their administrative costs. Due to the extraordinary situation this year, it is important to extend influenza vaccination season so as many people as possible can be protected.

Thank you for your help in protecting Californians from influenza during this flu season.

Howard Backer, M.D., M.P.H., Chief  
Immunization Branch

Enclosure